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Media Lie, Jews Die

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By Kathleen Hayes

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Now they're setting Jews on fire.

On Sunday afternoon a small group of mostly elderly Jews marched peacefully in Boulder, Colorado to show their support for the innocents being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. The group has done this every week. They walk along a pedestrian mall toward the courthouse, say the names of the hostages, and sometimes sing "Hatikva." Except this week, a man screaming "Free Palestine" and "Zionists deserve to die" hurled two Molotov cocktails at them. The tranquil scene became one of carnage, screams and terror. Twelve people were injured, at least one very seriously. One of the victims is an 88-year-old woman who survived the Holocaust, only for her life to be threatened again by antisemitic violence in America.

It feels so terrifyingly familiar. A little over a week ago, a leftist reportedly uttered the same words — "Free Palestine" — as he murdered a young couple emerging from a Jewish museum in Washington, D.C. A few weeks before that, a man named Cody Balmer allegedly set fire to Pennsylvania's Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro's home — while the Jewish governor and his family slept inside — saying he was motivated by "injustices to the people of Palestine." That's three murderous attacks in less than two months. The "pro-Palestinian" protesters on our university campuses have got what they've been chanting for. The intifada is being globalized.

The man accused of the attempted murder in Boulder is an Egyptian, who was reportedly in the U.S. illegally, named Mohamed Sabry Soliman. Soliman was armed with Molotov cocktails, but his incendiary material was also helpfully supplied by the media.

When I was a Marxist and convinced I was on the right side of history, I often wondered how simple-minded people swallowed crude, obvious forgeries like "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" — believed in them so fervently, they were incited to carry out pogroms. I couldn't understand how anybody, however primitive and uneducated, believed the blood libel — the claim that Jews murder Christian children to use their blood for making matzah. And of course I especially couldn't understand how so many Germans believed the hateful and clearly deranged lies the Nazis spread about

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unconcerned while six million Jews were murdered. How, I asked myself, can human beings not only allow such a thing to happen, but actively support it?

I no longer wonder.

Murderous Jew-hatred always comes dressed in righteousness. Only the contours of the fashion change. Where once villagers informed each other in the marketplace what monstrous thing the Jews were doing, now we have the mainstream media, podcasters and social media. These bien pensants trumpet that Israel is responsible for the world's most shocking evils, crimes that good people of conscience must oppose. As Melanie Phillips recently observed: "To the Western liberal, for whom Zionism is racism and Israel starves babies to death, antisemitism is therefore not just the shield behind which the Jews sanitize Israel's crimes. It's no longer a uniquely murderous and deranged creed that all people of conscience must oppose. Horrifyingly, for the Western liberal antisemitism has become a moral obligation."

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Hours before the attack in Boulder, legacy media reported the latest charge: "Israel killed 31 Palestinians while delivering food." It was horrifying, shocking, outrageous … and totally untrue. Within a short time, Israel provided footage of the food distribution center at issue, showing that it was entirely peaceful while the massacre was supposedly taking place. The IDF also released drone footage showing what appear to be gunmen firing at civilians amassing for food elsewhere, suggesting that Palestinians may have been shot by their own leaders. But why should the media trouble itself with that story, when the one accusing Israel was so much more satisfying? The headlines about war-crazed, racist Israel remained up, and an Egyptian man in Boulder apparently decided to finally carry out the plan he'd spent a year working on, wreaking vengeance on a group of local Jews.

"Fourteen thousand children will die of starvation in 48 hours." "Israel is committing genocide." "Israel kills 500 at al-Ahli hospital." "IDF raped and killed women at al-Shifa hospital." "Israeli forces targeted medical teams and Arabic speakers at al-Shifa Hospital." "Israel intentionally targets women and children." All wildly and ludicrously untrue — just as the "Protocols" is untrue, the blood libel

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but to an increasingly large number of people, it doesn't matter. What matters is what the recipient wants and feels to be true. The false inflammatory headlines may later be quietly tweaked or corrected, but it won't matter. What will remain is the outraged quivering finger — "The Jews did it!" — and the conviction about who must pay.

In a chilling and erudite piece for the Free Press, historian Jeffrey Herf predicts that these latest murderous attacks will excite and stimulate others to further attacks — much as 50 years ago, the radical Weathermen spurred other leftists to embrace violence, if "only" vicariously. The left's demonization of Israel and Zionism then entered academia and festered for decades. Quoting Paul Berman, Herf notes that after the wave of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians in 2000 by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, "the popularity of the Palestinian cause did not collapse. It increased." Berman summarized: "There was, in short, an idea that each new act of murder and suicide testified to how oppressive were the Israelis. Palestinian terror, in this view, was the measure of Israeli guilt."

With the recent violence against Jews, and defenders of Israel, there's a sense of watching the needle move — of America lurching toward a lethal and barbaric place. But we still have laws, and police, and rights, and voices we can raise. And so we must.

The explosion of antisemitism after Oct. 7 reflects the triumph of this view, combined with relief that long-festering Jew-hatred can finally be released. With the recent violence against Jews, and defenders of Israel, there's a sense of watching the needle move — of America lurching toward a lethal and barbaric place. But we still have laws, and police, and rights and voices we can raise. And so we must.

Kathleen Hayes *is the author of "Antisemitism and the Left: A Memoir."*

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